



**WisDOT/Wisconsin Council of the Blind Meeting  
Tuesday, September 7, 2004, 2:00-3:15pm**

People in attendance

Casey Newman, WisDOT BOP  
Bobbi Retzlaff, WisDOT, BOP  
Bruce Parkinson, WI Council of the Blind  
Richard Johnson, WI Council of the Blind  
Gary Goyke, WI Council of the Blind  
Dan Wenzel, National Federation of the Blind  
David Hyde, Statutory Council on Blindness  
Jerry Neidermeyer, Badger Assoc of the Blind & Visually Impaired  
Jacob Hall, Badger Assoc of the Blind & Visually Impaired

1. Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, by WisDOT staff. The meeting began at 2:00. Gary Goyke provided a brief overview of WisDOT. Casey Newman gave an overview of WisDOT's long-range plan *Connections 2030*. WisDOT is seeking input on transportation planning issues from statewide stakeholder groups. *Connections 2030* is scheduled to be completed in 2006.
2. Gathering of input from the WI Council of the Blind: Discussion focused on the following issues:
  - a. Pedestrian Safety  
Several issues related to pedestrian safety were discussed:
    - 1) Crosswalk initiatives. Eleven Wisconsin communities will be sponsoring a white cane safety day in an effort to educate motorists regarding the white cane law. In addition, it was noted that Wisconsin motorists in general do not obey any pedestrian-related laws and that more enforcement is needed.
    - 2) Lack of sidewalks. The lack of sidewalks poses a safety hazard to many types of individuals, including the visually impaired. Additionally, sidewalks need to be located on both sides of a street.
    - 3) Curb cuts. Diagonal curb cuts are difficult for visually impaired individuals, particularly if the street is already at an angle. Curb cuts that are perpendicular to the intersected street are easier to cross.

- 4) Hybrid/electric vehicles. Hybrid and electric vehicles pose a challenge for visually impaired individuals when crossing streets. Individuals use traffic noise to help them cross the street, however, hybrid and electric vehicles are virtually silent.
- 5) Personalized transportation (e.g., electric scooters, carts, etc.). Since these vehicles are often used on sidewalks, they present hazards to both the users and other pedestrians. More clear guidelines are needed to regulate these vehicles.

b. Intercity Transit

The loss of Greyhound service to many Wisconsin communities has limited the ability of visually impaired individuals to travel. Individuals now have to rely on friends or family. Prior to the loss of Greyhound service, intercity travel was already limited, particularly in small rural communities.

The Council noted its support of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. It was also noted that highway rights-of-way could be used for a monorail system.

c. Transit/Taxis

The inability of communities to qualify for funding for both transit and shared ride taxi systems limit riders ability to freely travel. If a community has a transit system, riders must either conduct their trips during transit service hours. If a community has a transit system and a taxi system, riders technically have 24-hour service, however, taxi fares are significantly higher than transit fares. Allowing funding for both transit and shared ride taxi in the same community would make taxi fares more affordable and provide 24-hour service.

It was noted that visually impaired individuals often do not qualify for paratransit or other services for elderly/disabled individuals.